

of his essential purity, won the Berkeley Gold Medal for Greek, and was seen about in a very striking pair of trousers. In 1874 he got a classical scholarship and went to Magdalen College, Oxford. Here he soon became a figure of note. He took a First Class in Classical Moderations and Literae Humaniores, and won the Newdigate Prize with his poem *Ravenna*. He went out road-making with Ruskin, not because he liked manual labour but because he loved the master's prose. He talked with Pater—or rather he talked while Pater listened. And sometimes he dressed in knee-breeches and silk stockings, explaining that a reformation in dress was more important than a reformation in religion. "Luther's neckties," he declared, "would always have been quite shocking I" He took with him from Oxford a reputation as a brilliant talker, a promising poet and an incorrigible *poseur*. Though helped by a small income, this reputation was not enough to keep him in comfort in London. He soon got to know every one worth knowing—from William Morris (who, on his deathbed, said the only person he could bear to see was Oscar Wilde) to Whistler (who, at a later date, managed with some difficulty to pick a quarrel with him). He went to all the first nights, became friendly with Henry Irving, praised Ellen Terry effusively, and fell in love with Lily Langtry. He was, in short, a social success, but without the money to live up to his invitations. Something had to be done about it. So he produced a volume of poems, which was almost an anthology of echoes. Marlowe, Milton, Keats, Arnold, Tennyson, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, Browning, and several French poets had influenced his work rather more than the critics had a right to expect. They condemned it heartily, boomed it incidentally, and the reading public, preferring the echo to the voice, bought it manfully. Wilde helped the sale of his poems by parading the streets of London in a curious costume—knee-breeches, silk stockings, a strange tie, a strange hat, and still stranger flowers in the button hole of his velveteen coat. This remarkable raiment was donned as a protest against the age of the horsehair sofa. He was caricatured in *Punch*, jeered at in the streets, and became the talk of London. The ^Esthetic Movement had found its prophet, and Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan had found a good subject for their new opera. The cat-calls of errand-boys and the cartoons of critics did not, however, help

to fill his pocket, and when he was invited to
lecture in